HIS FAMILY WAS MURDERED BY A PSYCHOPATH IN AN AGE WHERE JUSTICE CAN BE BOUGHT AND NO ONE BELIEVES IN OLD FASHIONED *PUNISHMENT* ANYMORE... NO ONE EXCEPT *JAKE GALLOWS*... A WEAPONS SPECIALIST IN THE *PUBLIC EYE POLICE FORCE* BY DAY, AT NIGHT HE IS INCORRUPTABLE JUSTICE. STAN LEE PRESENTS:

THE PUNISHER 2099

IT'S THE SAME NIGHTMARE OVER AND OVER AGAIN... TRYING TO HELP MY FAMILY... FAILING...
LEGS BURNED... CAN'T REACH MOM...
AND I APPEAL TO THE GOD OF THUNDER WHO SHE WORSHIPPED...
THOR... SAVE MY MOM...!
...BUT HE NEVER ANSWERS ME.
THAT WAS SO REAL...!
LO, MORTAL! THOR IS HERE! AND BRINGS GREETINGS AND GOOD TIDINGS FROM THE HALLS OF ASGARD!
WHAT THE SHOCK...?!
THOR...?! YOU'VE COME!
WAIT A MINUTE...WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE...?

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HEROES DAY

PAT MILLS & TONY SKINNER
WRITERS
TOM MORGAN
PENCILER
KEN LOPEZ
LETTERER
JOEY CAVALIERI
EDITOR
JIM PALMIOTTI
INKER
IAN LAUGHLIN
COLORIST
TOM DEFALCO
HERO #1

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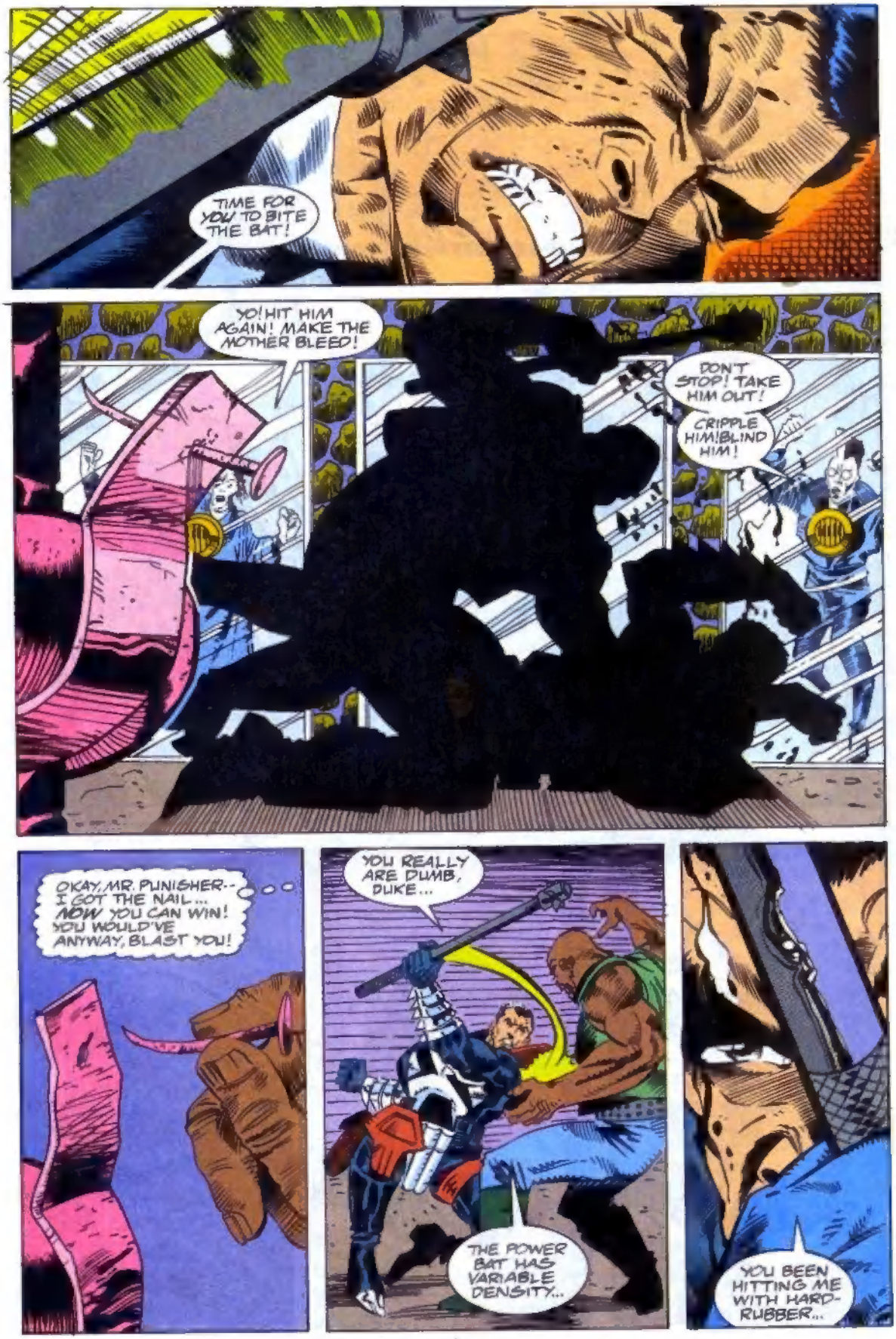
OF COURSE--IT'S THE DECREDS' ANNUAL CARNIVAL: "HEROES DAY"...
LED BY BARRIO MAN, THEY CELEBRATE THE LOST AGE OF HEROES...
'CAUSE TODAY THERE ARE NO MORE HEROES.
HERE'S THE STATE OF THE WEATHER, FOLKS...AN OZONE CLOUD OVER THE CITY, YOU LUCKY PEOPLE...SO DON'T WASTE THE CHANCE--IT'S OFF WITH THOSE HATS...
...LEAVE THE U.V. SPRAY ON THE SHELF AND SOAK UP THE GREAT OUTDOORS...
NO SUN FOR MY "HOUSE GUESTS".
TIME TO FEED THEM, I GUESS...RELOAD THE NUTRI-BREAD HOPPERS...

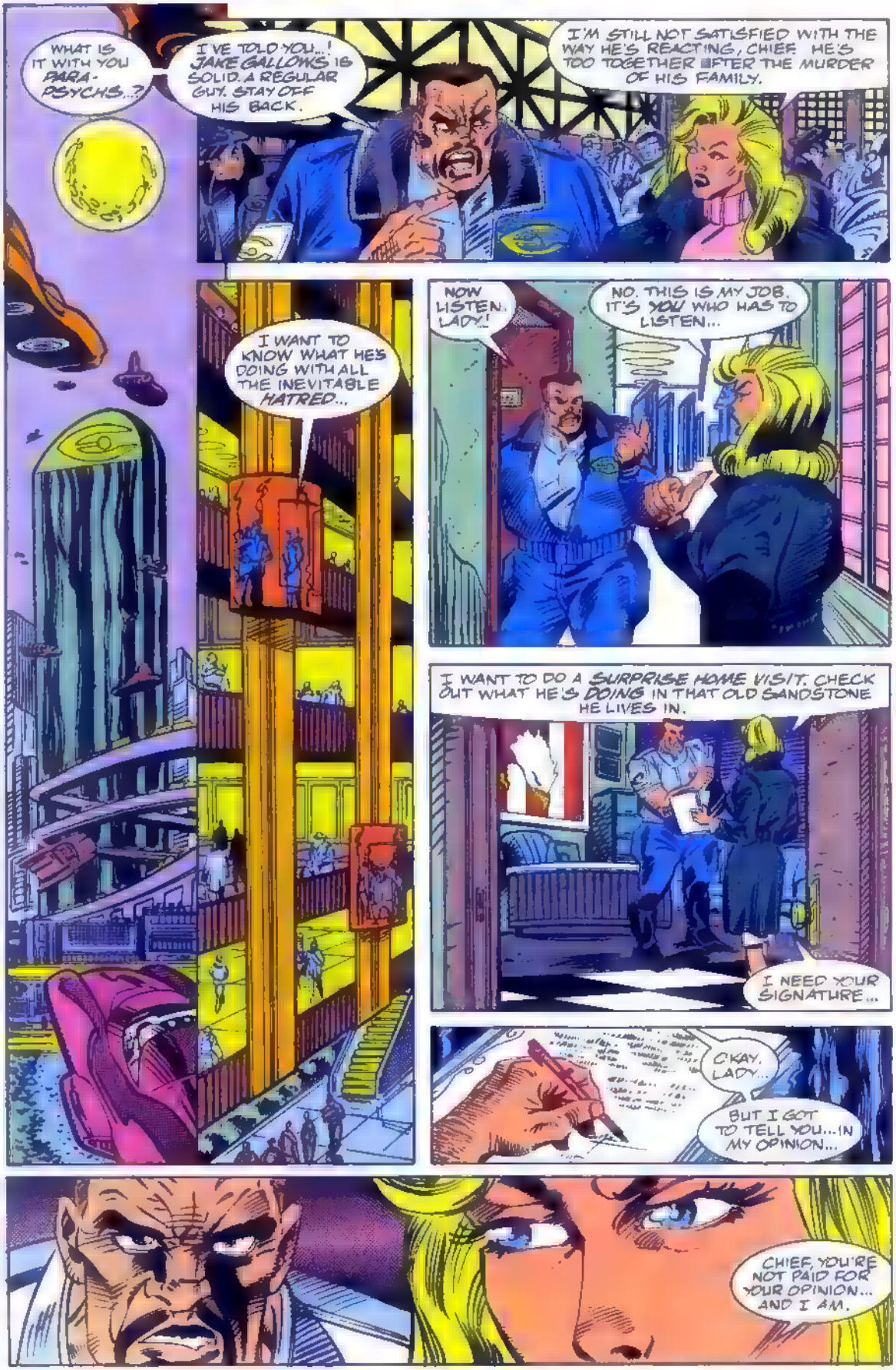
AH! IT'S ROOM SERVICE!
OUR FOOD RAN OUT YESTERDAY.
WE AIN'T HAD NO BREAK-FAST.
I WAS BUSY...
SO WHAT'S THE JAZZ OUTSIDE, MAN?
IT'S HEROES DAY.
SO HOW COME YOU AIN'T OUT THERE, CRIMEBUSTER?
KEEPING US LOCKED UP DOWN HERE--HE AIN'T NO HERO.
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT, SLIME.
AT LEAST LET US HAVE SOME VISITORS, MAN.
SCUM LIKE YOU DON'T HAVE FRIENDS.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT HER...SHES SEEING SOMEONE ELSE.
HEY-- WHAT ABOUT MY GIRL?

YO! NO FOOD'S COMING OUT OF MY HOPPER-- IT'S BLOCKED.
STAND BACK AGAINST THE WALL. DON'T TRY ANYTHING OR YOU'LL GET HURT.
IT'S JAMMED WITH TOWEL PAPER, YOU--UUUGHH!
WE'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR CRIME AND PUNISHMENT BULL...!
AHHH!
...TIME FOR YOU TO SUFFER, MR. PUNISHER, MAN!


TIME FOR YOU TO BITE THE BAT!
YO! HIT HIM AGAIN! MAKE THE MOTHER BLEED!
DON'T STOP! TAKE HIM OUT!
CRIPPLE HIM! BLIND HIM!
OKAY, MR. PUNISHER-- I GOT THE NAIL... NOW YOU CAN WIN! YOU WOULD'VE ANYWAY, BLAST YOU!
YOU REALLY ARE DUMB, DUKE...
THE POWER BAT HAS VARIABLE DENSITY...
YOU BEEN HITTING ME WITH HARD-RUBBER...

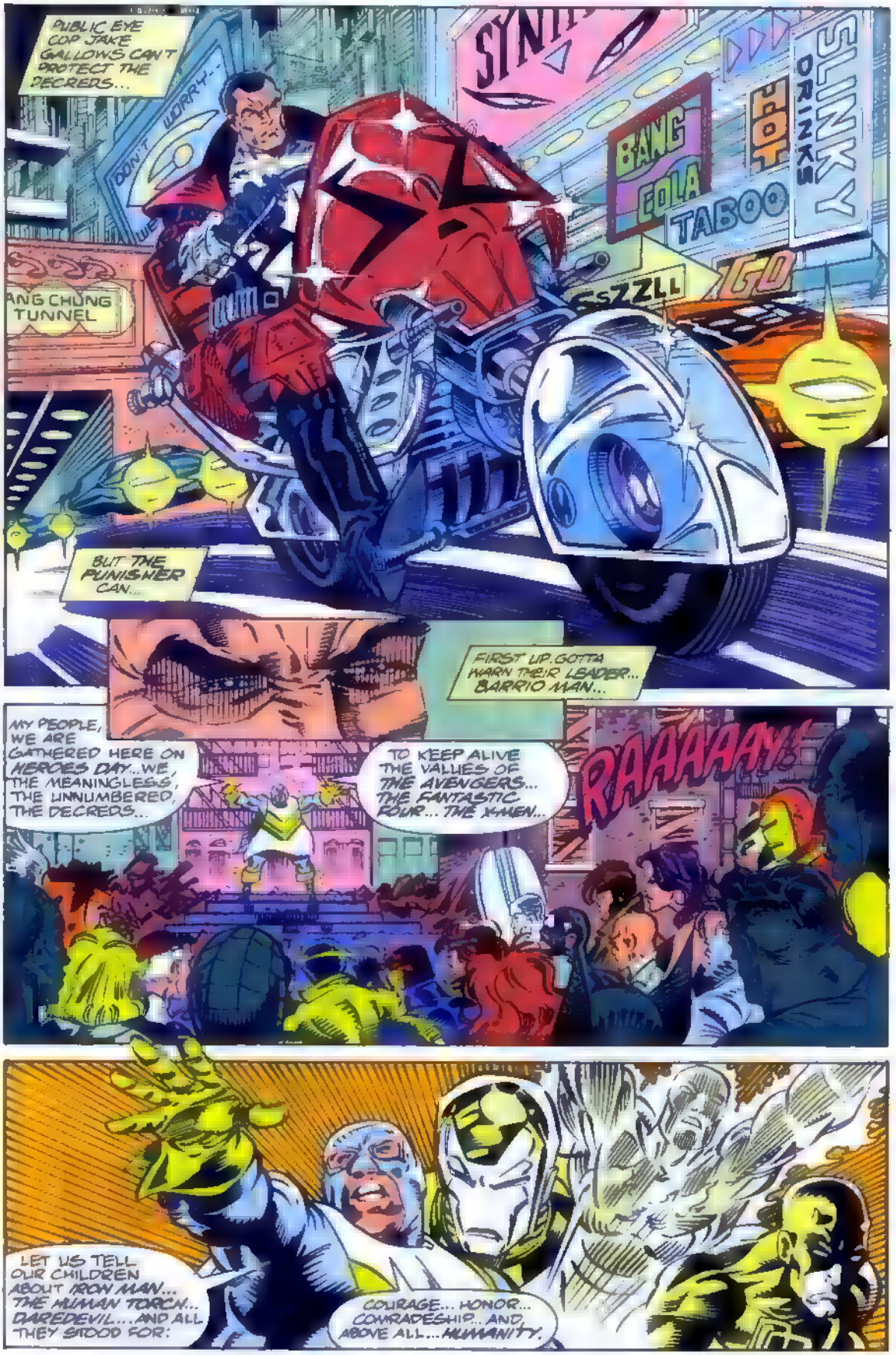
I NEVER USE THE LOWER SETTINGS MYSELF!
I PREFER TITANIUM STEEL!
BUT I DO APPRECIATE THE EARLY MORNING WORKOUT...
...AND YOU DID GET A VISITOR.
THE JERK FELL FOR IT... I GOT THE NAIL, GUYS...
NEXT TIME IT'S THE REAL THING!

WHAT'S THE POINT OF WHAT I'M DOING...?
KEEPING ALL THOSE "HOUSE GUESTS" DOWN BELOW...?
I'D BE A FOOL IF I THOUGHT PRISON COULD CHANGE THEM... THEY'LL NEVER BE MODEL CITIZENS.
SO WHY HAVE I GOT THEM LOCKED UP?
MAYBE THAT PARA-PSYCH AT EYE H.Q. WHO IS TAKING SUCH AN INTEREST IN ME, IS RIGHT...
...MAYBE I AM GOING A LITTLE CRAZY.


WHAT IS IT WITH YOU PARA-PSYCHS..?
I'VE TOLD YOU..! JAKE GALLOWS IS SOLID. A REGULAR GUY. STAY OFF HIS BACK.
I'M STILL NOT SATISFIED WITH THE WAY HE'S REACTING, CHIEF. HE'S TOO TOGETHER AFTER THE MURDER OF HIS FAMILY.
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING WITH ALL THE INEVITABLE HATRED...
NOW LISTEN, LADY!
NO. THIS IS MY JOB, IT'S YOU WHO HAS TO LISTEN...
I WANT TO DO A SURPRISE HOME VISIT. CHECK OUT WHAT HE'S DOING IN THAT OLD SANDSTONE HE LIVES IN.
I NEED YOUR SIGNATURE...
OKAY, LADY...
BUT I GOT TO TELL YOU...IN MY OPINION...
CHIEF, YOU'RE NOT PAID FOR YOUR OPINION... AND I AM.

MORNING, CHIEF... OH, HI, KERRY...
CHIEF
JAKE...
WHAT'S WRONG, CHIEF...? YOU LOOK A LITTLE DOWN...
I'M FINE... ER... JAKE-- WHAT ABOUT YOU... YOU OKAY...?
SETTLING DOWN ALL RIGHT... AFTER...?
SURE CHIEF. NO PROBS. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I THINK I'M CLOSER TO DISCOVERING WHO THIS "PUNISHER" IS...
GOOD WORK... EXCUSE ME A MOMENT...
YUP...?
JUST HAD A TIP-OFF, CHIEF... THE CYBER-NOSTRA ARE MOVING IN ON THE DECRED BARRIO... WITH BULL-DOZERS-- IT'S A LAND GRAB...
HOPING TO CATCH THEM OFF GUARD ON HEROES DAY, HUH...?
SMART THINKING...

ANYWAY, WHAT'S IT GOT TO DO WITH US...? DO WE HAVE ANY PUBLIC EYE SUBSCRIBERS IN THE BARRIO...?
WELL, NO...
THEN I SUGGEST YOU SIT BACK AND WATCH THE PARADE.
YOU MEAN...DO NOTHING...? WHILE THE CYBER NOSTRA KILL INNOCENT PEOPLE...?!
ER--YEAH... PRETTY MUCH.
I DON'T FEEL GOOD ABOUT IT--BUT WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO DO? BECOME A HERO AND FLY OFF TO THE RESCUE...?
HEROES DON'T GET PAID--THEY GET SHOT. THEIR WAGES ARE BULLETS IN THE CHEST.
JAKE...?

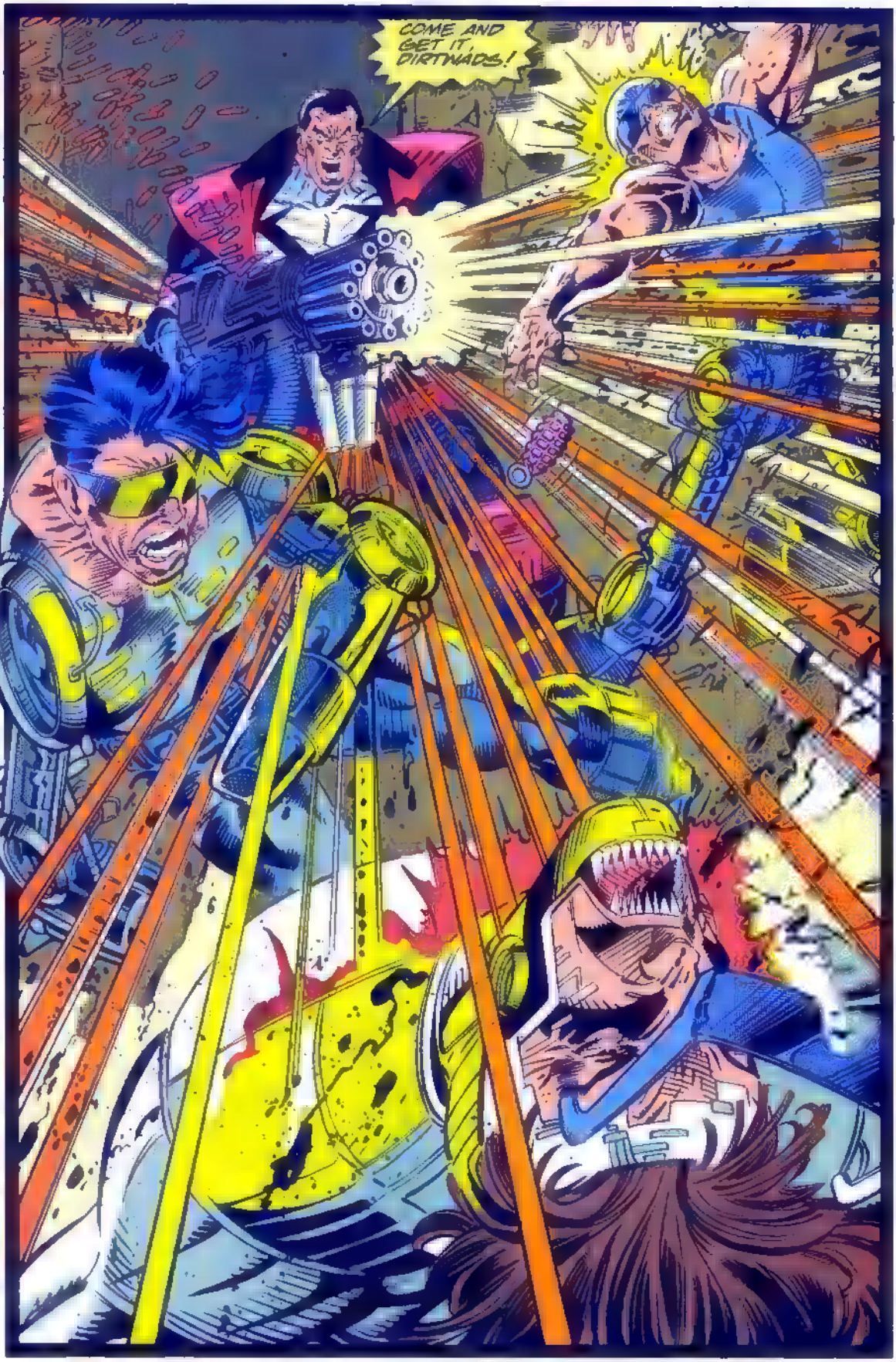

PUBLIC EYE COP JAKE GALLOWS CAN'T PROTECT THE DECREDS...
DON'T WORRY...
BANG
COLA
TABOO
HOT
SLINKY
DRINKS
GO
SSZZLL
ANG CHUNG TUNNEL
BUT THE PUNISHER CAN...
FIRST UP. GOTTA WARN THEIR LEADER... BARRIO MAN...
MY PEOPLE, WE ARE GATHERED HERE ON HEROES DAY..WE, THE MEANINGLESS, THE UNNUMBERED, THE DECREDS...
TO KEEP ALIVE THE VALUES OF THE AVENGERS... THE FANTASTIC FOUR... THE X-MEN...
RAAAAAAY!
LET US TELL OUR CHILDREN ABOUT IRON MAN... THE HUMAN TORCH... DAREDEVIL... AND ALL THEY STOOD FOR:
COURAGE... HONOR... COMRADESHIP... AND, ABOVE ALL... HUMANITY.

I DON'T WANT TO RAIN ON YOUR PARADE, BUT THE CYBER NOSTRA ARE IN THEIR WAY...
THEY INTEND TO CLEAR THE BARRIO FOR REDEVELOP-MENT AND THEY'LL KILL ANYONE WHO STORS THEM!
SYNTHIA
I AM THE SPIRIT OF THE COMMUNITY, SEÑOR. AND THEREFORE I CANNOT DIE. I WILL STAND FIRM AGAINST THEM.
WHAT?! YOU WON'T STAND VERY FIRM WHEN THE BULLETS START HITTING YOU.
SYNTHIA
DIE IF YOU WANT, BUT I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING WHEN THEY TURN UP...
NO... WE KNOW OF YOU, PUNISHER. YOU ARE A MAN OF EXTREME VIOLENCE.
YOUR PRESENCE WOULD ONLY MAKE MATTERS WORSE. WE'LL HANDLE THIS OUR WAY. PLEASE GO.

IT'S THEIR FUNERAL... BUT I HAVE TO RESPECT THEIR WISHES. PITY-- THEY'RE GOOD PEOPLE.
OKAY, LOSERS--WE HAVE THE TITLE DEEDS TO THIS AREA... ONLY JUST DRAWN UP TOMORROW MORNING...! CAN I DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO THE CLAUSE RELEVANT TO YOU...?
IT SAYS... "GET OUT OR DIE!"
NO! LEAVE OUR HOUSES ALONE! YOU HAVE NO RIGHT!

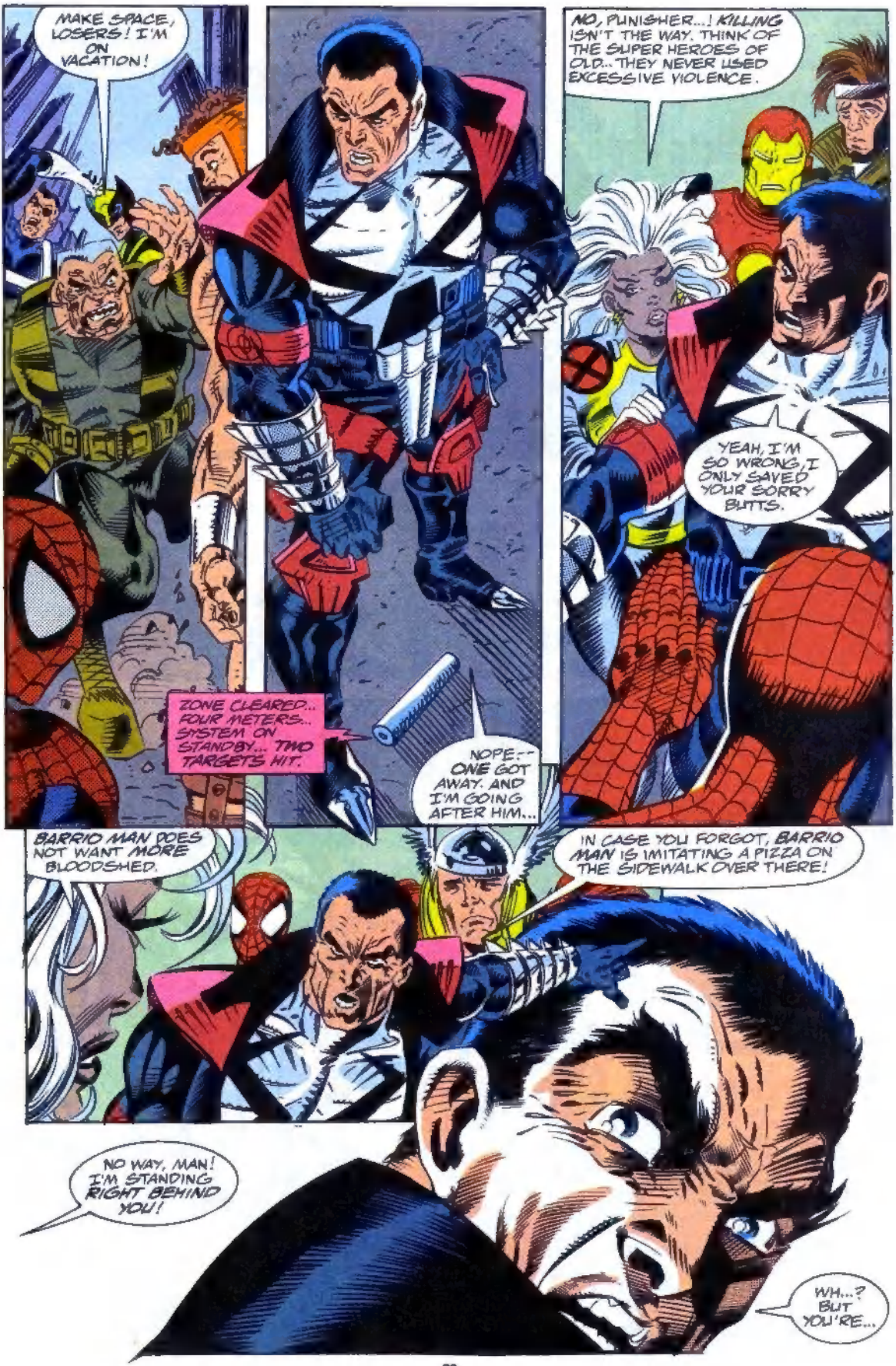
GASP! OH, NO! IT'S BARRIO MAN!
WELL, THAT'S IT GUYS... WE'RE BEATEN!
QUIT MESSING AROUND, MULTI... HE HASN'T GOT ANY REAL SUPER POWERS...
HE SOON WILL-- HOLD HIM STILL...
I'M GONNA SLAP A SUPER-DRIVER ON HIS SPINE...
THIS THING WILL DELIVER NEURO-ELECTRIC [redacted]Y STRAIGHT INTO HIS NERVOUS SYSTEM AND MUSCLES...
SO EVERY STEP HE TAKES WILL BE DOUBLE HIS LAST...
OFF YOU GO NOW...
MADRE DE DIOS!
AAAAAH!

HAHAHAHAHA!
HELP ME, PUNISHER!
WHAT THE ****! BARRIO MAN!
SPLUTT
SUPER-DRIVER... MUSCLES TORN UP... HIS BODY BROKE ITS OWN BONES AS THE POWER SURGED THROUGH IT... THOSE ****!
IT'S PAYBACK TIME.


COME AND GET IT, DIRTWADS!

"QUICK SPORE" GRENADE...! THE NOSTRA WOULD HAVE USED IT ON THESE FOLK...
AIRBORNE FUNGUS... AS SOON AS IT MAKES CONTACT WITH LIQUID IT GROWS--AT AN EXPLOSIVE RATE...
LET'S SEE HOW THEY LIKE IT...
BREATHE DEEP, SCUM!
IT REACTS WITH THE LINING OF THE LUNGS... TEAR DUCTS... AND OTHER MOIST PLACES...
OH, SHOCK! QUICK SPORE!
VOOOMF

STAND STILL, HERO--THIS WON'T TAKE LONG!
NEITHER WILL THIS!
ULP! GRENAZER!
WITH AUTO-SMART TARGETING, BOSS!
I'LL NEED TO BE QUICK... THANKFULLY AFTER FIFTEEN YEARS OF GRAV BALL I AM...
GEO-SPATIAL COORDINATES FIXED.. TWO TARGETS LOCKED.. LASER FIRING SEQUENCE COMMENCE...
LENNI, MY FRIEND, I REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR NOBLE SACRIFICE...
WH--
UUUUHH!


MAKE SPACE, LOSERS! I'M ON VACATION!
NO, PUNISHER...! KILLING ISN'T THE WAY. THINK OF THE SUPER HEROES OF OLD.. THEY NEVER USED EXCESSIVE VIOLENCE.
YEAH, I'M SO WRONG, I ONLY SAVED YOUR SORRY BUTTS.
ZONE CLEARED... FOUR METERS... SYSTEM ON STANDBY... TWO TARGETS HIT.
NOPE.-- ONE GOT AWAY. AND I'M GOING AFTER HIM...
BARRIO MAN DOES NOT WANT MORE BLOODSHED.
IN CASE YOU FORGOT, BARRIO MAN IS IMITATING A PIZZA ON THE SIDEWALK OVER THERE!
NO WAY, MAN! I'M STANDING RIGHT BEHIND YOU!
WH...? BUT YOU'RE...

...DEAD? BUT I TOLD YOU BEFORE--I AM THE SPIRIT OF THE COMMUNITY AND THEREFORE I CANNOT DIE.
IF THIS BODY IS KILLED, ANOTHER WILL WEAR THE MASK.
I'M STARTING TO GET ALL THIS... YOU'RE NOT BULLETPROOF LIKE THE ORIGINAL SUPER HEROES...
YOUR STRENGTH COMES FROM THE COMMUNITY... RIGHT?
YES. SO YOU UNDERSTAND, WE CANNOT BELIEVE IN--OR CONDONE--LONE VIGILANTES...
LIKE YOU.
I GET THE POINT, BUT DON'T PUSH IT.
I APOLOGIZE, PUNISHER. AFTER ALL, MANY MORE WOULD HAVE DIED HERE TODAY, BUT FOR YOU.
WE ARE GRATEFUL, BUT... PLEASE LEAVE US.
NO MATTER WHAT HE SAYS, I FEEL GOOD ABOUT HELPING THESE PEOPLE.
MAYBE WHAT I DO IS WORTH IT...
THERE IS A POINT TO IT ALL...
NEXT: PUNISHMENT HOTEL!